

Full Circle

by words-with-dragons

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Summary: "Why is the house empty?" "Because the Night Fury died."

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><p>It takes a while for her to notice, but from the age of four Nonta realizes it: there's far too many houses in her village. Some of them are burnt beams of wood surrounded by ash that haven't been rebuilt. Most of them are small and shabby, with only one parent left inside.<p>

The exception is the house on the hill. It's the largest, nicest one, but it's empty.

Nonta asks the young blonde woman, "Why is the house empty?" The blonde says an answer that is not really an answer, but it's the one she gets anyway: "Because the Night Fury died."

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><p>Winter lasts most of the year. The sky is dark and the ground is white and there's dragons that flock across the sky like birds. It's a huge mass of them, all different colours and a mess of wings.<p>

"Where are they going?" Nonta asks.

The blonde woman looks up. "To another island," she says simply.

Nonta wishes they could leave too. Her island only has fifty people -

she can count that high by the time she's eight - and she's not the only one with no parents. The blonde woman takes care of them - they call her Astrid the Fierce.

Nonta thinks she should be called Astrid the Sad.

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><p>Its in the spring of her tenth year that she gets taken to a huge ring of chains. There's a hole in one side, metal twisted upwards and rests stark against the sky. Nobody's bothered to fix it.<p>

There are dark stains on the stone too, but their instructor - a man Astrid's age with a fur cloak on his shoulder and eyes that look too old for his face - doesn't mention it. "I'm here to teach you how to handle dragons," Chief Snotlout explains.

The dragons come and go as they please. They don't come into the village (no, the women and few men that are still there won't stand for that) but they don't hurt anybody. Still, they learn how to avoid and not anger them, and how to fight them if necessary.

Nonta goes to Astrid to ask her questions. "Why are there stains on the floor? Why do we have to know how to fight the dragons?" She's fighting back hiccups - drank her water too fast - and Astrid's eyes fill with tears.

"Because the Night Fury died," Astrid says.

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><p>Nonta is fifteen and she thinks that being stuck in the Forge is the most boring job in the world. The blacksmith is a large man who doesn't really know what he's doing; learns through trial and error, that much is clear. Everyone calls him Fishlegs and he's having her fix wheel axles. Apparently she has the hands for it, like He did.<p>

She doesn't know who He is. Astrid is the only one who mentions Him, but she knows he was important. "Why?" she says and she already knows the answer: because the Night Fury died.

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><p>It's on one of the days at the Forge that she discovers a small backroom. Fishlegs is gone - at the Meade Hall, probably, or helping Chief Snotlout with something.<p>

The backroom is dusty and paper is everywhere. Drawings are all over the place and she looks through them, pulled by curiosity. In the beginning, years-worth of drawings are of weapons. And then, suddenly, they're of dragons. One dragon.

It's a beautiful dragon, unlike any she had seen. Its eyes are large and even though it's only charcoal and paper, she can feel the adoration the dragon looked upon the drawer with.

She has to go through stacks of dust and parchment to find a small notebook. The latter half of the book is full of more drawings, but the first page has a small name written upon it: Hiccup.

So she sets off to the Room of Records (shack, more like it) and pulls the record book open, flipping to over twenty-five years ago. It takes a while, but finally she finds Hiccup's birth date. And written close to it is his death date; when he was fifteen years old. And beside it, written clear as day are the words:

Traitor. "Befriended" a Night Fury that was later killed by Stoick the Vast.

It doesn't take long to find Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III's family tree. Stoick the Vast was his father, the Chief before Chief Snotlout. And ever stranger, Stoick the Vast had died on the same day as his son.

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><p>It takes her weeks to work up the courage, but Nonta finally asks Astrid, "What happens to traitors on Berk?"<p>

Astrid's sad eyes widen in surprise and if anything, get even sadder. "They have one day to leave the island. If they don't, the Chief has to execute them."

"What happened to Hiccup, then?"

"H-he died with his dragon, the Night Fury."

Astrid starts sobbing and Nonta doesn't fully understand why, even though she's almost seventeen at his point, but she knew that whoever this Hiccup was, he had loved the dragon with all he had and Astrid knew he would have been something great.

But that's not what Astrid says. All she says is, "Don't mention his name to anyone else, alright? They didn't understand."

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><p>Nonta is eighteen and intent on skipping out on the courting advice Astrid had been keen on giving her, so she heads to the forest. She finds a cove near Raven's Point and finds some black scales too; Night Fury scales.<p>

Briefly, she wonders what had transpired here. Was this where the Night Fury and Hiccup had become friends? Where they had met? Maybe where they were buried - only proper Vikings got funeral pyres, she knew.

It's there she finds an egg. It's black, and small, but she knows that it's already changed her life just by seeing it.

She sneaks it back into the village.

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><p>When Astrid discovers it, Nonta expects her to be angry. Instead, Astrid just looks conflicted. "You shouldn't keep it," she says, despite looking like she wants Nonta to.<p>

"Why?"

"Because the Night Fury died."

Nonta keeps it anyway and Astrid tells her she'll have to hide. She takes refuge in the cove. Once a sanctuary, perhaps always a sanctuary.

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><p>The egg hatches. Its a minute Night Fury and she names it Nibbles. It likes to nibble her with its toothless gums, after all.<p>

Nibbles grows with surprising speed, within a matter of months. Nonta assumes that Astrid has told everyone she's died. It seems almost unfair; unlike Hiccup, people will mourn her.

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><p>A year has passed and finally Nibbles is large enough to ride. The sensation fills Nonta with an exhilaration she never wants to let go of.<p>

The happiness fades when she realizes what would happen if anyone saw her. Death, perhaps. Or maybe something good. Or definitely death, when Nibbles flies to her a craggy volcano through the mist and sea stacks and she sees a huge carcass of a dragon.

There's a Night Fury skeleton there too - hundreds of human skeletons. And Viking helmets.

And now she knows the truth. Hiccup discovered the Nest and so did Stoick. Hiccup died alongside his dragon at the Ring; and the Vikings who found the Nest all died. This beast was responsible for everything; the war, the death and the Berk that's barely hanging on.

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><p>Berk is dying and Nonta knows it. There's too much ash and too little food and too many sad people who lost everything in the duration of a day. The blackest day, she's decided to call it.<p>

So when she tells Astrid she's leaving, she knows it selfish and she knows Astrid's simply grateful she came to say goodbye. "Sometimes I wish I hadn't stopped him from going too," Astrid admits.

A lump forms in Nonta's throat. "I'll come back some day, if I can," she promises. Nibbles rumbles reassuringly.

"His dragon's name was Toothless, you know," Astrid says, giving Nibbles a pat on the head. "He took Toothless' flight away and gave it back. Maybe through you he can give Berk life again."

The words echo through Nonta's mind as she flies off. Nibbles croons below her and she scratches behind her dragon's ear plates.

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><p>Nonta does come back. She shows her people who the dragons can be

friends. A few people go for it; Astrid convinces others as well. When Chief Snotlout bonds with a Nightmare, she knows the deal is sealed.<p>

Berk will shape and change and move on, but do it without her. Her whole life she wanted to leave Berk - get away from its too many houses, dusty drawings and sad eyes. But she does have a request:

"Honour Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third and his Night Fury, Toothless."

She takes the drawing with the adoring eyes with her, tucked safely back in her pockets.

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><p>She checks up on Berk fifty years later when she attends Astrid's funeral. The villagers kept their word - the story of a boy and his dragon are told around the fire and there's a statue of them in the market.<p>

But she's gone as soon as she's there and she tells everyone on the mainland who will listen about it and Nibbles. And when they ask why, like they always do, her lips twist into a sort of smile and grimace.

"Because the Night Fury died."

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><p>AN: is this clear or just confusing? Whatever... If you guys didn't put it together, here's the premise: Stoick kills Toothless in the Kill Ring after speaking with Hiccup and uses a Nadder to guide him to the Nest and also executes Hiccup. Naturally, all the Vikings die but as a massive force manage to wound the Red Death enough that it's too hurt to get food for itself. But its hypnotic call to the dragons is broken and they don't obey. So it dies.**

I've had this rolling around in my head for a little while, so tell me what you thought.

End
file.